

**Preliminary Amendment of U.S. National Stage for International Application
PCT/EP00/07496 filed August 3, 2000**

introduced into the dephlegmation zone such that the portion of the gas/vapor phase and/or the condensate are contacted with the second polymerization inhibitor. Apparatus for carrying out the processes are also described.--

In the Claims:

Please add new claims 10-35, as follows:

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--10. (New) A process for producing esters, said process comprising:

(a) providing a liquid reaction mixture comprising (i) an unsaturated carboxylic acid having a boiling point greater than water, (ii) a polyhydric alcohol, and (iii) a first polymerization inhibitor, in a reaction zone having an inner surface;

(b) reacting the acid and the polyhydric alcohol to form an ester, such that a gas/vapor phase is formed comprising water of reaction;

(c) removing at least a portion of the gas/vapor phase from the reaction zone to a dephlegmation zone having an inner surface;

(d) partially condensing the portion of the gas/vapor phase in the dephlegmation zone such that a condensate is formed; and

(e) returning the condensate to the reaction zone;

wherein a second polymerization inhibitor is introduced into the dephlegmation zone such that the portion of the gas/vapor phase and/or the condensate are contacted with the second polymerization inhibitor.--

--11. (New) The process according to claim 10, wherein the second polymerization inhibitor and the first polymerization inhibitor are the same.--

--12. (New) The process according to claim 10, wherein the second polymerization inhibitor introduced into the dephlegmation zone comprises a portion of the liquid reaction mixture which is removed from the reaction zone.--